

REMARKS:

The claims in the application are 1, 3-10, 12, 19-21, 34 and 37-40.

Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The present amendment is being made in accordance with a telephone interview between the Examiner in charge of the above-identified application at the Patent and Trademark Office and undersigned attorney on Wednesday, June 27, 2007. The courtesy extended by the Examiner in arranging for and conducting the telephone interview, is greatly appreciated.

More specifically, Claims 12 and 34 which have been indicated allowable in paragraph 4 of the Final Office Action have each been amended into independent form as presented for discussion during the telephone interview. Claim 38 has also been amended into independent form as presented for discussion during the telephone interview. Claims 13-18, 22-33, 35 and 36 which have been withdrawn from consideration (see, e.g., paragraph 1 of the Final Office Action) have been canceled without prejudice, the right specifically reserved to file a co-pending divisional application to the subject matter of these withdrawn claims.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended as presented for discussion during the telephone interview and taking into account the Examiner's suggestion during the telephone interview (i.e., directed to the elected embodiment shown in Fig. 5). Additionally, independent Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the recitation of Claim 2 which has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 3, 19 and 20 have been amended to reflect the

amendment to independent Claim 1 *supra* (Claims 19 and 20 have been amended back into dependent form), while Claim 10 has been amended to make a minor correction of a reference numeral.

Accordingly, the only outstanding issue is the prior art rejection of the claims. More specifically, Claims 1, 5-11 and 37-40 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 6,419,983 to Kreuzer in view of WO 02/04279 to Goebel et al in paragraph 5 of the Final Office Action, while Claims 1-5 and 8-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 or 103 as anticipated by or obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 5,088,176 to Koga in paragraph 6 of the Final Office Action (it appears WO 02/04279 to Goebel et al has been cited in making the obviousness rejection in paragraph 6). Furthermore, Claims 19-21 have now been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over U.S. Pat. No. 6,419,983 to Kreuzer in view of DE 201 10 676 to Ehrenleitner et al in paragraph 7 of the Final Office Action.

However, it is respectfully submitted the invention as recited in all pending claims herein is patentable over the applied art, for the following reasons (reference will be made to preferred embodiments of the present invention illustrated in the drawings of the present application).

As pointed out during the telephone interview, Figs. 17 and 18 of Kreuzer simply show a single shaft 13 extending perpendicular to the direction of movement of vehicle bodies 1, unlike the present invention as recited in independent Claim 38 having both an axis 68 extending substantially parallel to direction of movement C of workpieces 22 along

the handling line 12 and an axis 32 extending substantially perpendicular to the direction of movement C of the workpieces 22 along the handling line 12. Goebel et al fail to remedy this deficiency in the teachings of Kreuzer.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite the specific structure of the second module, i.e., carriage 60 comprising an outer frame 26 and an inner frame 28 revolving around a rotary shaft 32 relative to the outer frame 26 whereby workpieces 22 can be fixed to the inner frame 2, with the rotary shaft 32 disposed in an essentially horizontal and perpendicular manner relative to the direction of movement C of the carriage 60 along the handling line 12, and at least one carriage 60 having both rotary 42 and travel 64 drives. Additionally, independent Claim 1 recites the guide device 44 is disposed only on one side of the handling line 12.

Kreuzer, Goebel et al and Koga all fail to show or suggest the specific structure of the second module or carriage 60 recited in independent Claim 1. As pointed out previously, Koga does not serve for surface treatment of workpieces. Furthermore, Ehrenleitner et al fail to show or suggest the feature of a guide device 44 disposed only on one side of a handling line 12; running surfaces 13, 14 are mounted on respective I-shaped bearers 15, 16 situated on both sides of the handling line in Ehrenleitner et al (see column 3, lines 38-43 and Figs. 2, 6 and 7 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,676,755 to Ehrenleitner et al).

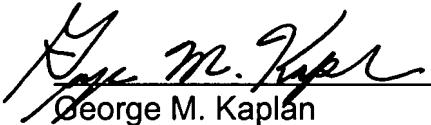
Therefore, improved versatility, adaptability and efficiency in treating workpieces 22 such as vehicle bodies attained with the present invention, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the applied art, even in combination. The remaining art of record has not

been applied against the claims and will not be commented upon further at this time.

Accordingly, in view of the forgoing amendment, accompanying remarks and telephone interview in the above-identified application, it is respectfully submitted all claims pending herein are in condition for allowance. Please contact the undersigned attorney should there by any questions. A petition for an automatic one month extension of time for response under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) is enclosed in duplicate together with the requisite petition fee, RCE filing papers and filing fee, and fee for the additional independent claims introduced herein.

Early favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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